

OPPOSE HB2393

Topic: Coastal resilience policy

Bill Patron: Hodges

OPPOSE HB2393 as amended

Reasons to oppose:

- This legislation originally stated, “The Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources and all relevant agencies, when setting coastal resilience policies, may seek input and consultation from the Commonwealth’s research university collaborative.” The collaborative included both the Virginia Coastal Policy Center (VCPC) at the College of William and Mary and Old Dominion University’s Institute for Coastal Adaptation and Resilience (ODU ICAR) as it passed the General Assembly.
- Since passing the General Assembly, William and Mary announced that Virginia Coastal Policy Center would no longer exist within the William and Mary Law school, but that the school would be creating a new entity with the ability to reach across all William and Mary colleges.
- The Governor’s amendments would remove both Virginia Coastal Policy center and Old Dominion’s University Institute of Coastal Adaptation and Resilience from the university collaborative and name Virginia Sea Grant as the leader of this new entity.
- Virginia Sea Grant has no legal, policy, or engineering expertise on staff. Removing VCPC and ODU ICAR would leave the university collaborative unable to fulfill the policy charge laid out in the legislation.
- The decision for how the Commonwealth will fill the gap left behind in the wake of VCPC’s closure is far too important to Virginia’s natural resources to inject to legislation never intended to address this question.
- Additionally, the question of how universities working in the resilience space should be organized is under discussion in the Governor’s resilience authority workgroup convened by Secretary of Natural Resources Voyles. The workgroup includes resilience experts from State, Academic, private industry, and non-profit sectors who are leaders in resilience and adaptation. Acting ahead of the issuance of that report would be inappropriate as it would deny Virginia the benefit of their collective expertise.



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This position was taken by Virginia Conservation Network (VCN)’s Legislative Committee and Board of Directors and is supported by Virginia’s conservation community. For a complete list of VCN positions, visit www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker. VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth’s natural resources today and for tomorrow.